Children's Policy Council Needs Assessment

County: _____   **Contact: _____**

Phone: (___) _____-_____   **E-Mail: _____**

<u>**Member**</u>   <u>**Signature   .**</u>

Juvenile Judge(s)   _____

Director of the Department of Human Resources   _____

Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation   _____

Department of Youth Services   _____

Department of Rehabilitation Services   _____

Medicaid Agency   _____

Department of Public Safety   _____

Alcoholic Beverage Control Board   _____

Superintendent(s) of Education   _____

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer   _____

County Health Department   _____

District Attorney   _____

Local Legislators   _____

Chairperson of the county commission   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Use Additional Pages if Necessary

Part I

Assessment and Planning

HEALTH

Issue 1: _____

       Policy Council Action Step (s):
            1.

            2.

            3.

Issue 2: _____

       Policy Council Action Step (s):
            1.

            2.

            3.

Measure:
       Baseline:
       Goal:

Measure:
       Baseline:
       Goal:

Measure:
       Baseline:
       Goal:

State Program and Policy Recommendations:
       1.
            Explanation:
       2.
            Explanation:
       3:
            Explanation:

SAFETY

Issue 1: _____

      Policy Council Action Step (s):
          1.

          2.

          3.

Issue 2: _____

      Policy Council Action Step (s):
          1.

          2.

          3.

Measure:
      Baseline:
      Goal:

Measure:
      Baseline:
      Goal:

Measure:
      Baseline:
      Goal:

State Program and Policy Recommendations:
      1.
          Explanation:
      2.
          Explanation:
      3:
          Explanation:

EDUCATION

Issue 1: _____

       Policy Council Action Step (s):
            1.

            2.

            3.

Issue 2: _____

       Policy Council Action Step (s):
            1.

            2.

            3.

Measure:
       Baseline:
       Goal:

Measure:
       Baseline:
       Goal:

Measure:
       Baseline:
       Goal:

State Program and Policy Recommendations:
       1.
            Explanation:
       2.
            Explanation:
       3:
            Explanation:

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Issue 1: _____

       Policy Council Action Step (s):
           1.

           2.

           3.

Issue 2: _____

       Policy Council Action Step (s):
           1.

           2.

           3.

Measure:
       Baseline:
       Goal:

Measure:
       Baseline:
       Goal:

Measure:
       Baseline:
       Goal:

State Program and Policy Recommendations:
       1.
           Explanation:
       2.
           Explanation:
       3:
           Explanation:

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Issue 1: _____

       Policy Council Action Step (s):
1.

2.

3.

Issue 2: _____

       Policy Council Action Step (s):
1.

2.

3.

Measure:
       Baseline:
       Goal:

Measure:
       Baseline:
       Goal:

Measure:
       Baseline:
       Goal:

State Program and Policy Recommendations:
1.
       Explanation:
2.
       Explanation:
3:
       Explanation:

Part II

Priority Recommendations

2002 Desired Outcomes

Priority Number 1:

    Program or Policy Recommendation:

Priority Number 2:

    Program or Policy Recommendation:

Priority Number 3:

    Program or Policy Recommendation:

Part III

Evaluation

2002 Needs Assessment Evaluation

Circle Response

1. Was the 2002 format: *Simple*   *Complex*   *Not Sure*

2. Was the 2002 format: *Useful*   *Waste of Time*   *Not Sure*

3. Does the assessment truly reflect the needs of your county?   *Yes*   *No*

4. What category was the most useful to discuss?
    Health   *Safety*   *Education*   *Ec. Security*   *Early Learning*

5. What category was the least useful to discuss?
    Health   *Safety*   *Education*   *Ec. Security*   *Early Learning*

6. What was the most useful part of this process?

7. What changes would you like to see made to this format?

8. What would make this process more useful to you?

Instructions

The Children's Policy Council Needs Assessment serves several very important purposes. First and foremost it fulfills a legal responsibility for both the county councils and the state council. It serves as an avenue for a county to identify the issues that are affecting our children's ability to grow into productive citizens. It also gives the members of the council a voice to policy makers in Montgomery and Washington. Needs assessments are reviewed by agencies and legislators to learn what is needed and where priorities should be placed. This year's Needs Assessment will be available on line to be viewed by all citizens of Alabama and others across the country.

The completed assessment is due to the Department of Children's Affairs by July 1, 2003. Use the attached document as a template, not a form to fill out. We have not attempted to provide enough space for complete answers. Please include both a hard copy of your assessment as well as an electronic copy (Word Document if possible). If you have any additional questions please contact your field director.

In order to truly assess the condition of children in a county many broad areas must be covered. To accomplish this we have identified five broad categories:

Health – Children's (0 – 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.
Safety – Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.
Education –Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.
Economic Security –Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.
Early Care and Education –Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Once you have completed the Needs Assessment have your policy council members sign the cover page.

PART I – Assessment and Planning

Have the members of the policy council break into work groups or committees for each of the five categories. Members can select which committee or committees they are most interested in. Each committee should then examine the condition of children in the county in reference to the stated category. This discussion should produce a list of the primary issues affecting children's lives for the area. At least two issues should be identified for each category. For example, for the Health category a committee may determine that Births to Unmarried Teens and Adequate Health Insurance are the two primary issues.

Once a committee has identified the issues facing the county it should identify concrete Action Steps that the Children's Policy Council can complete. These actions can be big things or small things; they can be short term or long term. This can be the first step towards developing a Strategic Plan for the council. The important thing is that a plan is established to begin addressing the issue and that you will be able to report your progress for each of these action steps at your regular council meetings.

The next step is the identification of measures or statistics that can be used to assess and monitor the status of the county's children. Measures do not have to be related to the issues identified above. These measures may be pulled from the Kids Count Data Book, from other state or local sources, or could be a measure that has not been tracked but would be useful. Identify what the statistical measure is, where the information is available, establish a baseline figure, and develop a goal. This goal will most likely be a long-term goal because of the delays gathering data. Feel free to identify measures that would be helpful and could be tracked but are not currently being utilized.

Finally, list the programs or policies that would help you address the needs for this category. This could include specific policy changes for state agencies or specific changes to legislation to (1) improve the way services are provided, (2) eliminate road blocks or red tape that hinder quality services, or (3) provide for local flexibility to state programs. This could also include new programs or services to address the needs. Please use the categories in Appendix A to describe your recommendation and then explain what changes you are advocating. By using the attached list to categorize the recommendations we can easily compile the information and communicate it accurately to policy makers.

Each committee should present their plans and suggestions to the full council for approval.

PART II – Priority Recommendations

The purpose of this section is to develop a mission and vision for the council.
Once the issues, actions, measures, and recommendations have been developed for each category the entire council should then begin to discuss what the three priorities for the county's children are. These are stated as "Desired Outcomes" (i.e. "All children are healthy") in positive language and are accompanied by specific program or policy recommendations. These can reflect issues identified in Part I or could be overriding issues that cross over various categories. These outcomes should reflect what the council feels should be the priority for the council, its members, and state agencies.

PART III – Evaluation

Please give us some feedback on this process and formats so that we can make it more effective and better meet your needs.

Needs Assessments are due July 1, 2003. Please submit a signed hard copy and an electronic copy (preferably Word Document) to:

Department of Children's Affairs
Needs Assessments
RSA Tower, Suite 1670
201 Monroe Street
Montgomery, AL 36130-2755

If you have any questions please contact your field director.